

\$1M would deploy IMB personnel to Houston

GRAPEVINE, Texas (BP) — International Mission Board missionaries returning from the mission field as part of a voluntary staff reduction could find immediate opportunities to reach ethnic people groups in one of America's most diverse megacities — Houston.

The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's Executive Board will consider a recommendation in its November meeting to set aside \$1 million to facilitate returning missionaries as church planters or church revitalizers for the convention's Reach Houston initiative.

"Reach Houston is a SBTC plan to increase church planting and revitalization in the greater Houston area," Executive Director Jim Richards said.

"With Houston being the most ethnically diverse city in the United States," Richards said, "there is a need for language and cultural skills possessed by IMB personnel who have already served among the various people groups of the world."

Richards also noted that Houston's burgeoning population "calls for all types of churches to be planted as well as revitalization of existing churches in multi-ethnic neighborhoods by intentionally helping churches to become multi-ethnic congregations."

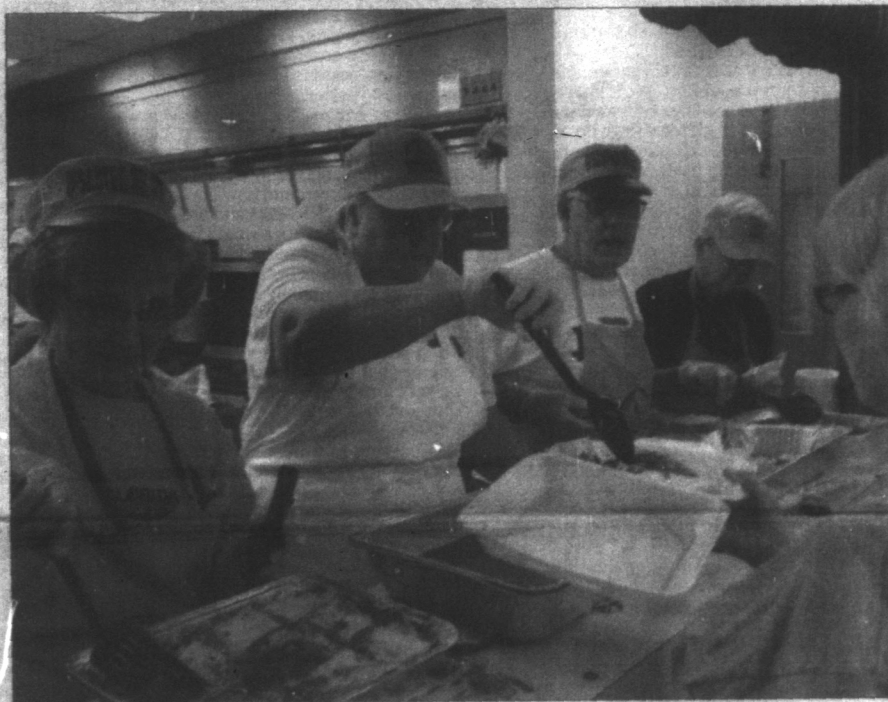
Richards estimates the \$1 million could support as many as 25 church planters and church revitalizers. The administrative committee of the convention's Executive Board will present the proposal, which would be taken out of reserve funds, for approval during the board's Nov. 11 fall meeting.

Robert Welch Jr., chairman of the administrative committee and pastor of Rock Hill Baptist Church in Brownsboro, said, "The missionaries coming off the field as a result of the IMB's VRI [Voluntary Retirement Incentive] bring huge ministry opportunities to stateside churches and communities. While the SBC family of

see HOUSTON on p. 11

DISASTER RELIEF

'Neighbors helping each other'



COMPASSIONATE SERVICE — Florida Southern Baptist Disaster Relief feeding team volunteers serve dinner at Old Fort Church in Summerville, S.C., in response to massive flooding in the area. (From left) Linda Wells, a member of First Church of Chipley, Fla.; Diane Raneri, a member of Old Fort Church, Summerville, S.C.; Bob Drury, a member of First Church of Wewahatcha, Fla.; and Jan Everett, a member of First Church, Lynn Haven, Fla. (NAMB photo courtesy of Laura Sikes)

Vols from 15 states aid in S.C. recovery

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP) — Hundreds of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers have provided significant service in South Carolina to survivors of flooding that covered the state in early October. SBDRL leaders said they are encouraged by the outpouring of service and sacrifice.

"I am so thankful for the volunteers from many states who are willing to provide the help needed in the recovery process for those affected by the flooding," said Mickey Caison, North American Mission Board interim executive director for Disaster Relief. "The government leaders and emergency managers in the communities affected have expressed their deep appreciation of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief's ministry and volunteers who are so compassionate. Discussions have begun with community leaders about the need for rebuilding of homes in the flooded communities."

As of Oct. 22, SBDRL volunteers from 15 states have been engaged in ministry in four

see RECOVERY on p. 10

ANNUAL MEETING OPENS



Matt Buckles, president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and senior pastor of First Church, Vicksburg, gavel into session the convention's 180th annual meeting at First Church, Jackson, on the morning of October 27. A new president will be selected by messengers as Buckles finishes his second term as president. The Oct. 29 issue of The Baptist Record will contain complete coverage of the annual meeting. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Inside this issue

Directions	4
Sunday School lessons	1
Editorial	2
Bibliography	5
How to Be a Christian	1
Revivals & Homecoming	1
Just for the Classifieds	1



associate From the editor

TONY MARTIN

Facing Your Fears

We just finished the 2015 run of the Mississippi State Fair in Jackson, which ran from October 7-18. I visited twice this year - it's a short walk from the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board building, and to make that trek for lunch from the Baptist Building is something of a tradition. The Fair brings out the oddest traits in folks; in my case, its eating foods I'd never dream of touching any other time of the year. For the record, I had a battered and deep-fried cheeseburger for lunch on one visit, and I'm talking about the bun, the patty, the whole works being dunked in batter and fried. It was actually pretty tasty, but the rest of the afternoon I felt like I had a stomach full of eels. That's something I won't be eating again.

On another visit, I was with a group of teenagers and what seemed to be thousands of our closest friends. It was body to body, and the lines for the rides reflected that.

As we strolled around, looking at midway rides with names like Fireball, Remix, Ring of Fire, etc., it was interesting watching the kids' reactions. There were mixed attitudes toward what they would ride, and choices seemed to be based on simple fear - as in, "If I ride that, I'm probably going to die, or at least lose my lunch."

I tend to play the odds, because I love amusement rides. I just believe that, most likely, I am going to survive anything on the midway. A little research reveals that ride-related injuries at major fairs are quite rare, and the Mississippi State Fair has one of the best traveling midways in the country.

It occurred to me that fear can be both real and imagined. One of the thrills of amusement rides is the exhilarating sense that you've embraced some horror and survived. You conquered your fear.

Part of the fair fear equation has to do with faith - as in, faith in the integrity of the ride, the competency of the ride operator, the track record of the fair itself. It's awareness that, barring some sort of catastrophic failure,

guests will disembark the ride shaky but thrilled.

Still, this is faith in man, and faith in machinery. We all have had the experience of machinery letting us down (certainly if you're an automobile owner), or, worse, people letting us down. A certain measure of faith in people and things is necessary in our daily activities, but that is not where faith ultimately needs to rest.

It would be easy enough to let fear conquer us, especially when it comes to wholeheartedly trusting God in all aspects of life. I would wager that most readers of *The Baptist Record* came to a point in their lives when they realized that they were in desperate need of a Savior, and in a moment of encounter, turned to God through Jesus and asked Him to come into their lives and possess them and give them eternal life. In other words, they expressed their faith in Jesus. They trusted Him for salvation.

Yet fear can still grip believers. Fear of the future, fear of illness, fear of death, fear of financial ruin, and fear of all sorts of loss ... you get the idea.

This begs the question - what are we really afraid of when it comes to our faith in Christ? Are we afraid He'll drop the ball, leaving us stranded in sorrow? Do we think that while He was worthy of trust for salvation, our fears are too big to trust Him with now?

Easy one. Of course He is worthy of our trust. Trust in Jesus banishes fear. For unknown reasons, though, we can act as though God is distant and aloof, and our fears and issues are simply too big for Him to handle. I don't know of a secret formula that will move us from fear to total trust, but I do affirm that His promise to never leave us or forsake us still stands.

In all things, then, trust Jesus. I have yet to meet anyone who said, "I met Jesus Christ and He ruined my life." There has never been a moment when He has been anything less than trustworthy in your life. Count on Him to be with you, when the days are a struggle and the nights are unusually long. He's got you.

Your pastor's family

Sometimes those who are most vital to a pastor's ministry - his family - can be forgotten. Yet, they are the ones most often ministering to the minister.

As a pastor's wife, I pray for my husband like no other. I encourage him when he needs to be built up and challenge him when he needs to be pushed. Our children allow their dad to laugh and enjoy life. They help him see God through the eyes of a child and sharpen his character.

A church member once asked my pastor husband, "How can we as a church best show you our support and love?" Without hesitation, my husband responded, "If you will love on my wife and children, then you will have shown me support and love, too." I have never forgotten that, and am thankful to serve in a church that has taken his words to heart and loved us well.

Here are a dozen practical ways you can honor your pastor's family and in return honor your pastor.

1. Pray for us. Yes, it's an obvious way, but one I often see undervalued. It's easy to quickly respond, "I'll pray for you," and then go on without another thought. Don't forget the power of prayer and how important it is to pray for church leaders and their families.

Thankfully, there is a woman in our church who calls or texts at least once a week, wanting to know how she can specifically pray for my family and me. Her prayers have shown such support and genuine care.

2. Pursue a meaningful friendship with us. Years ago, I had a mentor tell me that being a pastor's family can be very lonely position. At the time, I thought, "No way!" But as time went on, his words rang true.

Sometimes a minister's family feels they can only get so close to church members and any relationship has to be at an arm's length. Other times, members can hold the pastor and family up as something higher and separate from the church, instead of holding out a hand and inviting the family into their lives. Get to know us and do what it takes to invest in the relationship outside of the church walls.

3. Encourage our personal gifts or passions. We all have been graced with certain gifts, but as a pastor's spouse or kid, sometimes the ministries taking place in church can overshadow or devalue those abilities. Everyone needs encouragement in their God-given passions, pastor's family or not.



Guest opinion

with Kelly McCorkle
Parkison

I have a passion for orphans and victims of human trafficking in India, and the church members who have rallied behind me are such a blessing. They have supported the organization I started called LOFT 218. Many are donating and helping with a blanket drive for street people in the Indian province of Rajasthan. It's humbling and energizing to know I have the freedom to run after my passions and dreams.

4. Care about our kids. Oftentimes, churches will recognize ministers and their spouses for all they do, but they often forget the children who also have sacrificed for the ministry. Several times church members have done seemingly small, simple things that have meant a lot to our children. One family regularly gives our kids McDonald's gift cards. Another woman brought lip gloss to my daughters. Still others have spent considerable and consistent time in prayer for our children. Those things minister to the kids and the parents.

5. Encourage the pastor. When I hear church members praising or encouraging my husband, I know his passion for the church burns brighter, which in turn gives me more drive to serve the church as we'll.

Pastors are leaders and servants of the church, but they are still human and they are not perfect. But when people tear down my husband publicly, it's extremely painful. It cuts me to the core. If there is an issue, please take it directly to the pastor as the Bible says to do in Matthew 18.

6. Think of us with a gift. It can even be something small. It may be cliché, but it's true: "It's the thought that counts." Just to be thought of or remembered makes one feel valued.

A church member randomly brought me a bag of my favorite candy one day. It seemed small to her, but it showed that she listened when I shared about something I enjoyed. That impacted me in a big way.

see PARKISON on p. 10

THE BaptistRecord

Editor
William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

Associate Editor
Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

Layout/Design
Megan Young
myoung@mbcb.org

Advertising
Dana Richardson
drichardson@mbcb.org

Circulation Manager
Amy Massey
amassey@mbcb.org

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
Camille Anding, Etta T. R. Darsey, Winona Whit Lewis, New Albany Derrick Wilson, Kosciusko Carolyn Reeves, Oxford Garland Boyd, Brookhaven

Postmaster:
Send changes of address to: The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Send news, communication, and address changes to: The Editor, Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 969-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org



VOLUME 139 • NUMBER 43 • ISSN-0005-5778

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$10.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items - one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising - two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.



Cartoon 'Owlegories' supplement children discipleship learning

NASHVILLE (BP) — When Thomas and Julie Boto developed a smartphone and tablet app for their children using family members as the voices of animated owls, they had no idea their concept would catch the attention of an Oscar-nominated animator and become a Christ-centered children's DVD distributed by Walmart.

But that's exactly what happened.

On Oct. 20, "Owlegories" — an animated series in which student owls travel on adventures learning about nature, faith and God — began a trial run in Walmart stores across America. If it sells well, Owlegories could become a long-term fixture of the superstore's children's section.

Each episode "uses elements of creation as an allegory for the characteristics of God," Thomas Boto told Baptist Press. "So that's where we ended up, and we thought, 'Owlegories — why don't we just use owls as characters?'"

Owlegories originated because the Botos loved reading stories to their three — now four — children and wanted to create their own stories as a family project. An initial Owlegories storybook app was created by recording family members' voices in a closet at a Thanksgiving gathering and then placing them with simple animation.

Following that app's surprising success in 2013, a friend and film producer, Chad Gunderson, joined the project and introduced the Botos to Keith Alcorn, creator and executive producer of the Jimmy Neutron television series and movie. A fellow believer, Alcorn helped the Botos develop their animation, find voice actors to portray the characters and add music and sound effects.

Presented by Spy House Productions and Gunderson Entertainment, the resultant Owlegories episodes launched in the Owlegories TV app earlier this year. In addition to its Walmart trial, the inaugural Owlegories DVD is available at LifeWay Christian Stores, Amazon.com and through other retailers.

The first of three premier episodes is called "The Sun" and features a class of owls led by Professor Owlester learning about God by studying the sun. God is like the sun, they conclude, because He is powerful, gives light to guide us through His Word and gives life.

During the episode, viewers meet, among other characters, an owl named Twitch who hangs upside down because he was raised by bats and an owl named Joey whose puns typically fall flat with his classmates. The inept villain owl Devlin tries to stop the students in their quest to find the "Illuminator 3000," which turns out to be a flashlight. In at least one scene, viewers may detect a parody of Dora the Explorer.

Each Owlegories episode concludes with a message from a notable Christian leader. The first three episodes feature Tony Evans, pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas; author Jen Wilkin; and Matt Chandler, pastor of The Village Church, a congregation with three campuses in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

All episodes reflect the Owlegories theme: "You can tell a lot about an artist by what he creates."

The entire Owlegories family of products, Boto said, is designed to "supplement" parents' discipleship of their children.

"There are times when parents are going to need kids to be entertained," Boto said. "So this is a great, safe" way for children to watch for "a short time and still be fed by God's Word."

The Botos, members of The Mount, a Southern Baptist congregation in Keller, Texas, have plans for developing an Owlegories children's curriculum for churches, an Owlegories Memory Verse app and a children's evening devotional resource called "Night Owls."

Boto said his aim is "good, wholesome, funny and educational content" for churches and families.

For more information, visit owlegories.com.

Fall festival safety tips for churches to consider

JASPER, Ala. (BP) — Fall festivals can be fun but broken bones, food poisoning and burns are not. That's why churches should take steps to protect themselves and their guests from unnecessary risks during special outreach events, experts say.

Before hosting any special event, a church should first make sure its insurance policy covers activities that are outside the normal ministry schedule.

"From a risk management standpoint, what often happens is that churches don't think about exposures. They are only thinking about having fun. Danger doesn't even cross their mind," said Arthur Williams, an account executive with insurance firm Byars Wright Inc. in Jasper, Ala.

However, some insurance policies have special events exclusions, which mean if an injury or accident happens during the event the church has no insurance protection. A church needs to know the specifics of what its insurance policy will and will not cover.

Planning team

Once insurance coverage is confirmed, the event planning team should consider every aspect of the event and take precautions to improve the safety of the participants and volunteers.

If vendors or volunteers who are not affiliated with the church will be involved, it is important to vet those who will be on campus.

"One important question is do you know the volunteers," Williams said. "In terms of church insurance, volunteers who work with children have usually undergone a background check. Make sure you know the people who are working with children."

Outside vendors, like those who rent inflatable bounce houses or food carts, should have some insurance coverage for their business, Williams said. He suggested checking an operator's references and insurance coverage ahead of time so there are no surprises.

Food safety concerns

No festival is complete without treats, which means food safety concerns are another area that should be addressed in event planning.

Mark Sestak, deputy director of the division of food, milk and lodging for the Alabama Department of Public Health, suggested three key precautions that can help avoid food borne illnesses at special events.

One is proper temperature control of foods like meat and poultry, dairy products, cooked vegetables and pasta. Hot foods should be held at 135 degrees or above and cold foods at 41 degrees or below



FESTIVAL PREP — Fall festivals as outreach events can be fun but experts say proper precautions are vital. This photo of a fall festival at Northpark Church in Trussville, Ala., was taken in 2014. (BP photo courtesy of The Alabama Baptist)

for optimal safety, Sestak said.

The health of volunteers or employees also is important. While it might seem obvious, Sestak said any workers or volunteers who have had fever, sore throat or symptoms of vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours shouldn't be involved in food preparation activities.

A third precaution is to set up hand-washing or sanitizing stations, especially in locations near food.

Hayrides and bonfires

Since fall festival activities are often set up outdoors, supervision is a critical part of a successful event.

For example hayrides are a popular activity at fall events, but injuries from falls off hay trailers can be significant, ranging from broken bones and concussions to fatalities. Even simple precautions, like making riders sit still, improve rider safety. It also is important for the driver to be an experienced adult and for the equipment to be in good shape with adequate safety lighting and warning signs. Hayride operators also should stay off roadways and find alternate routes with little or no traffic, said Robyn Bradley Bryan with the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency.

Another common activity in the fall is a bonfire, which requires careful supervision especially when children are present. Local fire departments can provide specific requirements and might even help manage the event.

Generally the ideal size for a bonfire area and flames is 3 feet around by 3 feet in height, according to Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company. Fires should only be started with wood and lighters. Highly flammable accelerators like lighter fluid or gasoline should not be used. It also is important to keep extinguishing equipment (buckets of water, garden hoses or fire extinguishers) nearby. Once the event is over, the embers should be completely extinguished before anyone leaves the area.

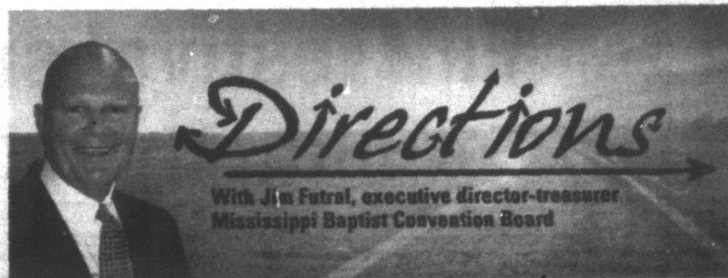
In addition to supervising specific activities, supervising traffic flow and walking paths throughout the event is essential to safety for everyone, especially young children.

Brotherhood Mutual Insurance recommends having separate areas for parking and activities. For example at a Trunk-or-Treat event designate an area for decorated cars and an area for visiting cars to minimize hazards. Supervisors should monitor the area where cars are moving and keep children as far away as possible.

The movie and film industry has grown significantly over the years here in Mississippi. For several decades more and more films have been produced here in our state and according to the news more are coming. Since I am not Mr. Movie Guy, I rarely see any film and I'm sure I have missed most of the ones that have been produced in Mississippi, but what caught my attention was an upcoming movie to be shot in the Central Mississippi area. The title of the movie is *Off* and the premise of the movie is not only fascinating but according to many could be a reality.

According to the news report, the plot involves a huge solar flare that sends out such strong waves of radiation that it shuts down all the computer grids and electrical grids and any and everything that is computer oriented across the world. Consequently, that is just about everything that is a part of our everyday life. The movie is going to deal with all of these various scenarios. Nothing will be operating and everything will come to a standstill. I have no idea where the storyline of the movie may go. In the movie, everything will come to a screeching halt for who knows how long.

Just think about all the big things that go on every day in your life that include your transportation. Whether it is by air, rail or water, all of it is stopped. Everything that you can think or imagine that is driven by electrical power and/or computers according to this theory will no longer work. Any and all forms of communication, whether it's TV or radio or social media would suddenly go blank. Every store that you frequent will probably be closed because



Off

there's no way for them to process your credit card or cash or have any heating or cooling. Folks would probably want to run to the bank to get some cash to use only to find the banks are not able to function either. Just suppose you were in the hospital or had an emergency, and you even got to the hospital, only to find out that virtually everything that takes place in the hospital and to you while you are in the hospital is so sophisticated guided by computer operations that little could be done.

According to the movie plot, everything that we have become so dependent upon for daily living would be off. It is a scary proposition and that is why it is being made into a movie. While the theory may be a real possibility, while this may or may not happen, it is interesting to stop and think about the fact that we have moved so far so fast into a technological world and become so interdependent on it that

without it, life has no meaning or future. Crazy, isn't it? To realize that 50 years ago these things that we think are so vital to human existence didn't exist and now we think we cannot exist without them.

Having grown up in some rural areas of our country, I can remember a few families that got their first electric line to their home. Some of them sat into the night hours staring at one light bulb hanging down from the ceiling in the middle of the room. What an amazing thing. I remember word spreading that some family had gotten indoor plumbing in their home. What a marvelous asset unless it no longer works.

I certainly am not trying to traumatize anyone. This is a movie idea that apparently is going to be filmed in Mississippi, but if *Off* were to actually take place, what would your life look like? In all the bad things that could happen in that scenario

one of the good things that could happen and can happen in your thoughts today is to reevaluate the true essence of your life and existence. Apart from all the computers and gadgets and conveniences of life, what is the essence of who you are and why you are here?

Think about it this way. Probably everything that will be presented in the movie and theoretically as you and I think about it are things that would shock, traumatize, and affect us in a devastating way, yet Jesus, the Son of God, lived in a world with none of those things whatsoever. Still His life had great meaning and purpose. He touched lives and made a difference in them. While He didn't cover thousands of miles in His travels, He walked virtually everywhere that He went and no person ever lived with more significance in His relationship to God the Father or to the people with whom He came in contact than Jesus.

An equally important thought that you might want to process is the real value of the things in your life like your personal relationship with God, the forgiveness of your sins that you can only find through Jesus Christ who died for you. And the reality for you and in fact all of us of our mortality that regardless of how many gadgets we have or creature comforts that we enjoy, one day we will take our last breath, live our last day and then we will face eternity. Even if everything is shut down and turned off, we need to know that we know we have met Jesus, been forgiven of our sins and are ready to be with Him forever.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Music Leadership Training school open for enrollment

Music Leadership Training is sponsored by the Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, in cooperation with the Providence Learning Center of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. In most locations the eight courses meet two hours per week with each course being eight weeks in length. Saturday locations may vary.

The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year period. Each course is independent and has no prerequisite. Each student who completes the eight courses earns a certificate from the Providence Learning Center of New Orleans Seminary. There is a one-time enrollment fee of \$25.00. The cost of each course is \$100.00. A \$60.00 scholarship is available for all first-time students.

The second course "Worship/Worship Planning" will meet at the following two locations and times:

■ First Baptist Church, Marion - beginning already in progress; Buddy McElroy, teacher, 601-938-8668

■ Immanuel Baptist Church, Cleveland - beginning November 9 (10:00 a.m.-noon); Alan Berry, teacher, 662-402-5645

■ Lincoln County Baptist Association Office - beginning November 9 (6:30-8:30 p.m.); Mark Hamilton, teacher, 601-835-6607

The third course "Reading Music: Rhythm/Pitch" will meet at the following three locations and times:

■ First Baptist Church, Marion - beginning January 18 (6:30-8:30 p.m.); Buddy McElroy, teacher, 601-938-8668

■ Immanuel Baptist Church, Cleveland - beginning January 18 (10:00 a.m.-noon); Alan Berry, teacher, 662-402-5645

■ Lincoln County Baptist Association Office - beginning January 11 (6:30-8:30 p.m.); Mark Hamilton, teacher, 601-835-6607

Please call the teachers for more information, or contact Slater Murphy at smurphy@mbcb.org, 515 Mississippi St., Jackson, MS, (601-292-3276 or 1-800-748-1651, ext. 276).

Sponsored by the Church Music Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention

College and Seminary News

► New Orleans Seminary is hosting an adoption conference, Equipped to Care, Nov. 6 - 7 on the seminary campus. The conference is sponsored by the seminary, the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home, and Crossroads NOLA, an adoption ministry of First Church, New Orleans. Featured speakers include Bruce & Denise Kendrick, Embrace, Texas; John Fuller, Focus on the Family; and Mary Landrieu, former U.S. Senator. Registration is \$30 by Oct. 30 at nobts.edu/events/equippedtocare.html.

EQUIPPED to CARE

Understanding and embracing adoptees and children in foster care



FEATURING

BRUCE &

DENISE KENDRICK
Embrace Texas

JOHN FULLER
Focus on the Family

MARY LANDRIEU
Former U.S. Senator

..... NOVEMBER 6-7, 2015

NOBTS - 3939 Gentilly Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70126

Registration is \$30. Please register by October 30th

Visit nobts.edu/events/equippedtocare.html to register online.

Pastors, Professionals, and Parents Welcome - Childcare available

Social Work, Counseling, and Foster Parent CEUs are available



'We cannot be silent,' Mohler says in new book

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — In the span of three months in the summer of 2015, three headlines marked historic events that generations of Americans past could never have imagined. First it was former "world's greatest athlete" Bruce Jenner debuting his gender transition on the cover of Vanity Fair. Next the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in all 50 states. Within a few weeks Americans witnessed the horrors of abortion in a series of undercover videos purporting to show Planned Parenthood profiting from the sale of aborted baby parts and organs.

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological

Seminary, issues a call for faithful, biblical witness in his latest book, "We Cannot Be Silent," that he says is ever more urgent in the wake of these landmark events. Written in late 2014, the book — to be published by Thomas Nelson Oct. 27 — examines the rise of the homosexual movement, the path to same-sex marriage, the emergence of transgenderism, and the sexual revolution's imperilment to religious liberty.

"I am confronted daily with Christians who are asking one of the most basic questions and that is, 'How did this happen?'" Mohler said in an interview with the seminary's Southern News, noting he wrote the book

to provide clear answers. "I think Christians are living with a kind of moral emergency they sense and see about them. And it's not just what they see on the headlines and on the Twitter feeds. It's what they hear from their kids and it's what they see in their own neighborhood and it's what they might see in their own church."

Mohler writes in his book that the cultural acceptance of contraceptives, no-fault divorce, reproductive technologies, and extramarital sex paved the way for same-sex marriage.

"Long before same-sex marriage was on the moral horizon, many of us were making clear that the divorce revolution was one of the central engines of the breakdown of marriage as an institution," Mohler said. "You can have heterosexual divorce without legalizing same-sex marriage, but you really can't legalize same-sex marriage until you've passed the moral threshold of normalizing divorce."

Mohler elaborated further on the need for evangelicals to be consistent on the issue, saying: "The Bible's message is not that some forms of sexual expression other than marriage are wrong, but that all forms of sexual expression outside of marriage are wrong."

Although the Supreme Court ruled in the 5-4 *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision to legalize same-sex marriage in all 50 states, Mohler insists the nation's highest court will one day be held accountable by the court of "divine judgment" for legalizing what he regards as a moral fiction. In his book, he penned a special "Word to the Reader" following the court's June 26 decision, calling for Christians "to speak the truth in love" and "to uphold the truth about marriage in our own lives."

"The biblical worldview explains that the fallen human reason will demonstrate itself in sinful irrationality. And even though same-sex marriage is, biblically speaking, not possible, in terms of human culture it is now possible. It was thinkable and now it's, at least in terms of a legal reality, actual. That doesn't mean, by the way, that it actually exists," Mohler said in the interview.

In the months before the Supreme Court's historic ruling, celebrity Bruce Jenner brought transgenderism to the forefront of the cultural conversation with the announcement of his gender transition. Yet Mohler, writing in his book several months before Jenner's declaration, said the transgender revolution has arrived and presents enormous challenges for evangelicals. He nevertheless insists those theological and pastoral challenges are not beyond the sufficiency of Christ's death and resurrection.

"Over 20 years ago, I made the prediction that the transgender

R. Albert Mohler, Jr.

WE CANNOT BE SILENT

Speaking truth to a culture redefining sex, marriage, & the very meaning of right & wrong

"We cannot be silent, but that's because He is not silent. And not only has God spoken and revealed Himself in His Word but He has called out preachers to preach that Word and assigned the responsibility to every Christian to be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within us."

R. Albert Mohler Jr.

president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

revolution would be far greater and more devastating in its effects, more potent in terms of its moral confusion, more complex when it comes to its pastoral challenge than homosexuality and even same-sex marriage," Mohler said. "The transgender revolution goes right to the heart of what it means to be human beings made in the image of God, and whether or not our bodies are part of God's intention for us and also reflect His glory and His purpose for us."

Mohler said the book's subtitle, "Speaking Truth To A Culture Redefining Sex, Marriage, And The Very Meaning Of Right And Wrong," indicates how the sexual revolution has "denied the fact that we can know the truth" by means of divine revelation.

Furthermore, the success of this revolution has imperiled religious liberty. Mohler, who re-

cently received the Edwin Meese III Originalism and Religious Liberty Award from Alliance Defending Freedom, said Christians must not only demonstrate "compassionate conviction" to the culture but prioritize expository preaching.

"We cannot be silent, but that's because He is not silent," said Mohler, invoking the title of his earlier book on preaching, "He Is Not Silent." "And not only has God spoken and revealed Himself in His Word but He has called out preachers to preach that Word and assigned the responsibility to every Christian to be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within us," Mohler said.

We Cannot Be Silent is available for preorder and will be in stores Oct. 27. For more information, go to: www.WeCannotBeSilent.com.

BIBL i O C I P H E R

ETG RA LEXG NTCH CRAZ, XC XL THC

KHF MHN CH PTHJ CRA CXZAL HF CRA

LAELHTL, JRJUR CRA KECRAF RECR

BNC XT RXL HJT BHJAF.

EUCL HTA: LAOAT

Clue: N = U

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 21:22

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

OVERLOOKED THAT IS IN YOU

20th ANNUAL Men's CONFERENCE 2015 **Cost \$40**

NOVEMBER 6-7, 2015

MEADOWVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH

Find us on facebook www.facebook.com/meadowviewbaptist

www.mbestark.com

Meadowview Baptist Church
300 Linden Circle | Nashville, TN 37259
(615) 223-2983

Just for the Record



FIRST CHURCH, SHANNON, held a deacon ordination Oct. 11. Shown are Vickie Mask, Ricky Mask, pastor John Davis, Jason Arledge, and Mary Glenn Arledge.



EASTVIEW CHURCH, LAUREL, ordained Kevin Lipps and Andy Russell as deacons Oct. 18. Shown are Ronnie Holifield, Russell, Lee Hathorn, pastor Thomas Montgomery, Lipps, and Roy Morgan.



CALVARY CHURCH, EUPORA, celebrated its 60th anniversary. Shown are charter members Jane Sparkman, Carolyn Womack, pastor James Justice, Sue Watson Boatman, and Charles Watson.



FIRST CHURCH, ITTA BENA, held its 2015 Children in Action badge ceremony Sept. 20. Shown are the participants.

In other Church News:

► **Silver Creek Church, McComb**, will hold its annual trunk or treat Oct. 31, 5:30 p.m.

► **First Church, Pearl**, is hosting its 62nd annual pre-Thanksgiving Gospel Singing Nov. 14, 6:30 p.m. Artists include the Chuck Wagon Gang.

► **Mt. Carmel Church, Edinburg**, will host the Ricky Boler Family in concert Nov. 1, 6 p.m.

► **Ronnie Floyd**, Southern Baptist Convention president, and **Jerry Young**, president of the National Baptist Convention, will be leading a dialogue on race in America at the upcoming Racial Reconciliation Celebration Nov. 4 at the Jackson Convention Complex. Summit, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.; choir performance, 11 a.m.; fundraising luncheon, 11:30 a.m.

► **First Church, Runnelstown**, will host The Talleys in concert Nov. 5, 7 p.m. Love offering. Hal Hood, pastor.

► The men's ministry of **Mosselle Memorial Church, Mosselle**, is sponsoring their first annual Car-Truck show, Nov. 7, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Car, truck entry fee, \$20; free to public. Three trophies for pre '72; 3 trophies for post '72. Trophy for best of show. Includes silent auction, door prizes, slides for children, live music, hamburgers, hot dogs, and drinks. For entry information, call (601) 580-5550 or 520-3423.

► **First Church, Potts Camp**, will host Judgment House Oct. 28 - 29, 7 - 9 p.m.; and Oct. 30, 7 p.m. - until. Free admission. Concessions. Jessie Russom, director.

► **Magnolia Church, Laurel**, will host The Magnolia Boys in concert Nov. 14, 6 p.m. Love offering.

► **Sandy Hook Church, Sandy Hook**, is hosting a fall festival Nov. 1 immediately following the morning services. Food, fun, fellowship, and a silent auction.



A senior group from **LEMOYNE AVENUE CHURCH, BILOXI**, went on a fall trip Oct. 5 to the National Gospel Quartet Convention in Gatlinburg.



The children's group from **ARLINGTON CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO**, visited the pumpkin patch in Collins Oct. 17. Shown are the participants, Matthew Green, pastor.



BAY SPRINGS CHURCH, BAY SPRINGS, Women on Mission saved plastic bags and cut them into strips, which were then crocheted into sleeping mats for homeless people in the Jackson area by Malcom Woody, **BROADMOOR CHURCH, MADISON**. Shown are Rachel Lilly, Annie Jewel King, Judy Russell, Alice James, Florence Baker, Debbie Fenalson, and Grace James.

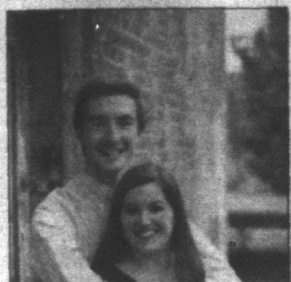


The youth of **FIRST CHURCH, MORTON**, presented a drama to the song, Total Eclipse of the Heart. Shown are the participants.

Staff Changes



(ABOVE) LIBERTY HILL CHURCH, POPE, has called Justin Medders as youth minister. He is shown with his wife Brooke and pastor Derrick Simmons.
(LEFT) WEST END CHURCH, WEST POINT, has called Tyler Bolen as student pastor. He is shown with his fiancée Sarah Glenn Burkhalter.



Revivals & Homecomings



FAIR RIVER CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, celebrated its bicentennial Sept. 27. Shown are Chip Henderson, Steve Jackson, pastor Jay Anderson, Anthony Kay, Neil Wigley, Sherry Turnage, and Chris Turnage.

► **Pine Grove Church, Pearl River Association**: 150th anniversary, Nov. 1; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Seth Kirkland, speaker.

► **Andrew Chapel Church, Brandon**: Revival, Nov. 6-8; Fri. - Sat., 6:30 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by potluck lunch and fellowship; Wayne McGee, speaker; Curtis Baker, music.

► **Hardy Church, Grenada**: 175th anniversary, Nov. 1; registration, 9 a.m.; choir practice 9:30 a.m.; service, 10 a.m.; guest speakers include several former pastors and members; James Melton, pastor.

Memory Care at St. Catherine's Village

CAMPBELL COVE IS CERTIFIED AS AN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE/DEMENTIA UNIT



CAMPBELL COVE AT ST. CATHERINE'S VILLAGE OFFERS MEMORY CARE ASSISTED LIVING

- Secure, homelike environment
- Specialized programming with activity focused care
- Nurturing staff helping with the activities of daily life

Coming Soon: The Hughes Center at Campbell Cove, an extension of our Memory Care Unit that accommodates individuals in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's and other dementias.

Call 601-260-8000 for more information

A subsidiary of St. Dominic Health Services



You can expect the outstanding care we are St. Catherine's fine services consistently to be awarded by CARR-COC. This mark of quality is achieved by more than 17% of retirement communities in America.



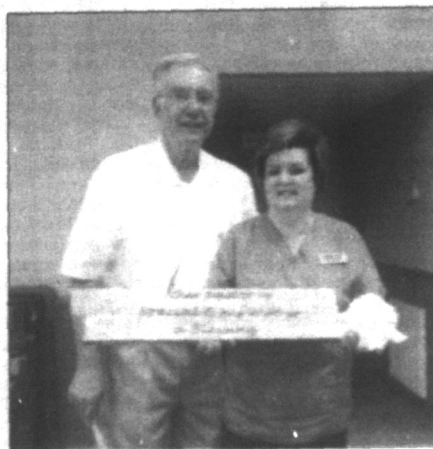
Just for the Record



CENTER RIDGE CHURCH, DEKALB, recently honored Lizzie M. Long for 50 years' service as a Sunday School teacher and was presented a plaque. Harvey R. Troutman, pastor.



PAUL TRUITT MEMORIAL CHURCH, PEARL, honored Red Taylor for 20 years of service as Sunday School director. Shown are Taylor, Janie Taylor, and pastor Kevin Griffin.



GILLSBURG CHURCH, GILLSBURG, presented gifts to Dr. and Mrs. Victor Walsh for pastor appreciation.



CALVARY CHURCH, SILVER CREEK, honored pastor Trey Spangler with a reception Oct. 18. Shown are Spangler, his wife Keisha, and children Nathan & Annie.

IMB personnel face difficult decisions

CARY, N.C. (BP) — Michael and JuliAn Domke are missionaries who wrestle with a painful, unexpected decision. He is the International Mission Board's team leader for church planting in Kiev, Ukraine. They were appointed in 2008 and moved their family from Florida to Eastern Europe, anticipating a long, fruitful ministry there.

But their plans may change. Domke is more than 50 years of age and has served with IMB for more than seven years. That puts his family among IMB personnel who received an unexpected offer Sept. 10 to take early retirement by the end of the year.

The voluntary retirement incentive is the first step in a plan recently announced by IMB President David Platt to resolve the organization's financial troubles.

The Domkes' initial response was a one of nervous uncertainty. "What are we going to do if we go back [to the United States]?" he asked. The Domkes are convinced God has called their family to Ukraine. "God has done a lot of things to get us here," he said.

Since his energy is focused on the call to make disciples in Ukraine, Domke did not know that IMB spent \$210 million more than Southern Baptists gave to international missions in the past five years.

But with the facts in hand, it did not take long to face the bottom line. "I have the gift of administration," Domke said. "You don't have to be a rocket scientist to see that this ain't gonna work. When you hear that every six months you eat up another month of reserves, and we only have a couple of months left, you just have to make some decisions."

Domke does not believe the IMB leadership is a ting hastily. "I think what our [IMB] president is doing is wise. If I was in his shoes, I would probably do the same thing. You fix things today that are broken, so you can be stronger tomorrow."

When missionary personnel received the news Aug. 27, several members of the IMB team in Ukraine gathered to pray. "This has forced me to live more by faith. It's been a faith issue for me. That's not a bad thing," Domke said.

"Nobody wants to go through difficulty, but anybody that's been there will tell you that it seared something in their lives, once they got on the other side of it. The difficult things I have been through in my life — serving in the military, the passing of my dad, the passing of my mom — those things are markers in my life where God's done amazing things. I think that's what God wants to do. So I'm resolved. I believe what we [IMB] are doing is the right thing."

The Domke family expressed sadness that Southern Baptists' mission force will be reduced, but they believe, "That's the reality of where we are. You can't keep missionaries on the field today for the same amount of money you could 10 years ago. God's still God, and I'm still a servant, and we'll do what we need to do. I believe God's going to make us stronger and draw us closer," he added.

Raised as an unbeliever in Michigan, Michael Domke met Christ as personal Savior in the military. He was disciplined in Jacksonville, Fla., and enrolled in Liberty University where he met JuliAn. He served two Southern Baptist churches in Jacksonville for 19 years — two years at



THE DOMKE'S — Michael and JuliAn Domke are among the International Mission Board missionaries who must decide if they should accept the early retirement plan. (Contributed photo)

First Baptist Church, Ocean Way, and 17 years at San Jose Baptist Church, filling a variety of staff positions. Serving as the church's missions pastor, Domke knew God was calling his family to international missions.

He believes the Gospel travels alongside relationships. "I'm here because of a relationship back in Florida." While serving at San Jose church, a 60-year-old man from Ukraine needed a job. "The man did not speak English. He applied for a job, and I hired him as a janitor. Through that relationship, the senior pastor and I decided we needed to go to Ukraine to see how we can help this man's home church. We began a five-year partnership with that church, and now, 12 years later, I'm here."

There was a time when IMB had dozens of missionaries working in Ukraine. Today six IMB units serve in the capital city of Kiev. Two units are part of the seminary education team that equips internationals in church planting. "They have a really neat work with national church planters," Domke said. They assist Ukrainian Baptists in sending out their own missionaries.

"They can go where we can't ... for a lot less money. I really see this as key for advancing the Gospel in the former Soviet Union," he said. The nationals are better equipped and more effective than Americans who have tried to enter these countries.

The logistics team

Two other units serve in logistics and church planting. One of those families is Kanoot and Sarah Midkiff, with their two teenage children, Fisher and Faith. They are logistics coordinators who are serving their fourth year as apprentices — first-term career missionaries. Both were born in North Carolina and lived in the state most of their lives; were called to missions through N.C. Baptist churches; and both of their parents are still active in N.C. Baptist churches.

The Midkiffs sign contracts for colleagues, locate and rent apartments,

"Nobody wants to go through difficulty, but anybody that's been there will tell you that it seared something in their lives, once they got on the other side of it. The difficult things I have been through in my life ... those things are markers in my life where God's done amazing things. I think that's what God wants to do. So I'm resolved. I believe what we [IMB] are doing is the right thing."

Michael Domke
IMB missionary

purchase and sell vehicles, keep visas and other legal documents current for personnel and coordinate work with national staff. They build relationships, share Christ, serve in local churches and assist volunteer teams from the U.S.

The changes at IMB may expand the Midkiffs' responsibilities. "Most of our colleagues have served eight to 20 years," Kanoot said. "Two families recently reached retirement, and we helped them pack up. There is another family planning to retire in December, so we've begun with that process. Maybe the Lord is preparing us to say goodbye to others, now. This just wasn't on our radar screen. But, this isn't the first time we faced a financial crisis in considering our call to international missions."

When the Midkiffs were in the early stages of pursuing missionary appointment in 2009-2010, IMB announced the resources were not available for all who were in the application process. They were delayed. At that time Kanoot was serving as minister of missions at Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Boone, N.C.

As the church approached the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, he said, the congregation placed dozens of pairs of empty shoes on the altar to represent missionaries who would not be able to go overseas unless financial support increased.

"IMB is like a family, and we feel very close to the [Richmond, Va.] staff who are making these decisions, and to our colleagues and their feelings," Kanoot noted. "Someone has to make these decisions, and we're thankful that God has put leaders in place to support us all the way through and to pray through this."

Sarah said, "We're concerned for others, but we don't know how all of this will affect us. My life verse keeps coming to my mind — Romans 8:28. God has assured us that 'all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.'"

"We have no doubt that we were called here, but we don't know if God will move us to another place — God knows. We would like to be here for many years, but God has a plan. I just want to be open with the Lord and say, 'wherever You want.' Our [IMB] president often says our lives need to be like a blank check before the Lord."

Last year Russia invaded Ukraine. Many mission agencies began withdrawing personnel. Sarah said, "Our kids were praying, 'Lord, please allow us to stay here.' IMB personnel stayed. That was another way God worked in our children's lives."

Ukrainians were impressed that IMB missionaries did not leave in spite of the conflict.

Kanoot said, "We've seen God answer prayer, so we know He can provide for our needs and the needs of IMB."

Thankful for opportunity

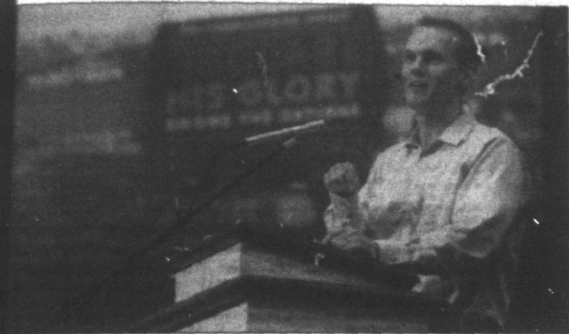
As Southern Baptists look at the financial needs for missions, Michael Domke has a request. "I would encourage people to get involved with missionaries. I'm not saying it would solve everything, but that's what I miss on the [international] mission field — involvement with people from America."

Frequently missionaries leave their international field because it's too difficult, he said.

"It's lonely. No matter how you slice it, it's just not easy," Domke said. "One of our former IMB presidents used to say, 'It's not the elephants that will get you, it's the termites.' In other words, it's the little things that will get you to leave the field. The things that help us are the relationships."

The Midkiffs also noted the importance of churches that support them through the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. "I want to say how thankful I am for the faithful and sacrificial giving of Southern Baptists over all these years," Sarah said.

To see all of the missionaries who have lived cross-culturally for so long and the reputation that we have as Southern Baptists — that we care about taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth, for that I am very thankful. I'm proud to be an IMB missionary. It was a dream of mine when I was a young woman. I'm thankful to have had this opportunity, however long it lasts."



LATT

Platt to discuss IMB's future in live Web event

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — International Mission Board President David Platt invites pastors, church leaders and members to be part of an IMB-hosted live stream event Oct. 27, 3 p.m. EDT, to discuss the organization's present challenges and future vision.

The hour-long online video forum will provide a way to dialogue

as participants ask Platt questions via Twitter and Facebook. Beginning Tuesday morning, Oct. 27, live stream viewers can submit questions on IMB's Facebook page or through Twitter by using #IMBLiveStream.

"We must get to a healthy place in the present in order to be in a healthy position for the future,"

Platt said. "We want to move forward with innovative vision, wise stewardship and high accountability to the churches we serve, the peoples we reach and the God we worship."

Register for the Web event at imb.org/live. For questions or comments about the IMB live stream, email info@imb.org.

CLASSIFIEDS

CYPRESS SHORES BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER. If interested please send resume to Cypress Shores Baptist Church, 4327 Higgins Road, Mobile, Alabama 36619.

1995 CHEVROLET BUS 25 PASSENGER. Accepting sealed bids (minimum \$3500) till Nov. 3. Pictures at request. Contact 601-416-4695

HEIDELBERG STAINED GLASS, MERIDIAN, DESIGN, FABRICATION, REPAIR. heidelbergstainedglass.com or call 800-368-2705.

UNIVERSITY BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME YOUTH MINISTER. Send resumes to University Baptist Church, Attention: Ashley Barrios/Search Committee, 904 Menard Street, Thibodaux, LA 70301 or email ubc@ubchthibodaux.net

WINDOW AND SCREEN SHOP — windows and storm windows built to fit your opening. Plus new window screens and recolor old screens. Call Tom Cook 601-709-4675.

GET THE BEST RATES ON: Health Insurance and Medicare Supplements. Call 1-800-544-8196 or visit www.turnerinsuranceonline.com

GATLINBURG RENTAL: Cabin "25night." Contact: 832-922-0401 or Email: prickett760@att.net for information and booking.

STAINED GLASS: new windows and repairs. Hopper Stained Glass, Jackson, 601-502-0202.

CHURCH PEW UPHOLSTERY, FREE ESTIMATES. Davis Upholstery, Gulfport, Miss., phone 601-776-6617.

RAGGERROOS: A COMEDY WASHTUB BAND. We sing, play instruments, and tell jokes. Call us at 601-657-0736.

STAINED GLASSWORKS, INC., serving MS & AL since 1992. Call 601-605-2970

WWW.SEBRENHOMEIMPROVEMENT.COM: Christian owned Don & Rita Sebre. 601-992-2092. All home improvements: siding, energy efficient windows, metal & shingle roofs, screen & sunrooms, patio covers, decks, room additions, kitchen & bath upgrades.

AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS: Gulf Shores & Orange Beach, AL. Rent direct from Christian Family Owners, lowest prices on the Beach. www.gulfshorecondos.com, 205-556-0366, 205-752-1231, 251-752-2366.

MS POSITIONS

BI-VOCATIONAL OR PART-TIME PASTOR, DOCKERY BAPTIST CHURCH, PO Box 577, Ruleville, MS 38771. We are located on Mississippi Hwy 8 between Cleveland and Ruleville. Send resumes to Larry Jelfcoat, 243 Mallette-Jones Rd., Cleveland, MS 38732, or Dockery Baptist Church, PO Box 577, Ruleville, MS 38771. My cell phone number is 662-347-3600.

MORRISON CHAPEL BC IN CLEVELAND MS IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR. Please send resumes to George Barefoot, 1612 Deering St, Cleveland MS 38732 or barefoot1016@hotmail.com. For more information call 662-719-5445.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ELLISVILLE IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME YOUTH MINISTER. Send resumes to First Baptist Church, attention: John Howard Robertson/Search Committee, 302 E Holly St., Ellisville, MS 39437 or email: efbcyouthmin@gmail.com

FBC MENDENHALL IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. Please send resume to PO Box 366 Mendenhall, MS 39114 or email to swarren@fbcmendenhall.org

GUM SPRINGS CHURCH, BRAXTON, MISSISSIPPI SEEKS PIANIST to serve during Sunday morning and evening worship, and Sunday evening church practice. Please submit resume to the Pianist Search Committee c/o Music Director, 375 Gum Springs Road, Braxton, Mississippi 39044, or email to jmanderson1575@gmail.com

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH IN MERIDIAN SEEKING QUALIFIED PERSON FOR CHURCH/FINANCIAL SECRETARY. Serious inquiries only. Email cover letter, resume and letters of reference to: meridianchurchsecretary@gmail.com

BIGGERSVILLE FBC IN ALCORN COUNTY IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Send resumes to 443 CR 514, Rienzi, MS 38865 or email bprelms@gmail.com

VALLEY GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH IN PONTOTOC, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER. Please submit resume to VGBC, 133 Drive 57, Tupelo, MS 38801 or email to dkstewartjr@gmail.com

CORINTH BAPTIST CHURCH OF MAGEE MS IS NOW ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE YOUTH MINISTER POSITION TILL DECEMBER 7TH. Those interested please send your resume to: Corinth Baptist Church, attn: Youth Search Committee, 207 Church Rd, Magee, MS 39111.

LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH IN FLOWOOD IS SEEKING A MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. Please submit resumes to Liberty Baptist Church, 5199 Lakeland Drive, Flowood, MS 39232 or email to office@lbcflowood.org

GOSS BAPTIST CHURCH IN COLUMBIA, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER. Please send resumes attention Youth search committee to 20 Mark McArthur Drive, Columbia, MS 39429 or online at markmc26@att.net

FBC PEARL IS LOOKING FOR A PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER. Experience in leading Choir and Praise Teams, blended services. Email resume to scottcravford01@msn.com. \$250.00 a week

COPIAH COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION SEEKING PART-TIME ASSOCIATION MISSION DIRECTOR. Please send Resumes to: Mr. Larry Papizan, Copiah County Baptist Association, P.O. Box 230, Hazlehurst MS 39083.

Has the battle for restraint in film industry been lost?

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (BP) — You don't hear many complaints about the excesses of Hollywood anymore.

Yes, I get cranky about profanity in pictures, but who else is talking about the misuse of God's name by the film industry? And when's the last time a critic wrote an exposé about violence in movies?

Nearly 30 years ago I wrote a guide called "The Movie Reporter"; its sole purpose was to provide the synopsis and content (the reasons for the rating) of new theatrical releases. I didn't even offer an opinion at that time. The guide was meant merely as a tool to aid parents and concerned moviegoers.

Times, however, have changed, and despite the efforts of Christian film reviewers who were as concerned about film content as myself, could it be that the battle for restraint in cinema has been lost?

Now I suspect that many readers of this column see very few of Hollywood's products, preferring the occasional faith-based release. And there's the TCM network (Turner Classic Movies). It's not that you necessarily want to watch old movies, just ones that won't offend your religious beliefs. Right?

So you avoid going to the movies. Good for you. But aren't you concerned nevertheless with the direction the media is leading the rest of this generation? Are you giving up the battle?

Let's be honest, we're way beyond the question, "Do the media affect our lives?" Many films stimulate our more carnal desires, whereas the Bible steadfastly maintains it is the spirit that needs to be satisfied. Today's motion pictures — with a few exceptions, such as the

new release "Woodlawn" and, a few weeks earlier, "War Room" — just aren't about nurturing the spirit.

"The Devil at 4 O'clock," made in 1961, was an adventure/drama concerning a priest played by Spencer Tracy who had lost his faith. He went through the motions but had become a man living by the laws of his religion, not a walk with Christ. Suddenly, in the midst of his despair, the island that is his mission field is threatened by a volcanic eruption. A ship is evacuating the population, but a few of his parishioners are still trapped further up the mountain. Aided by three convicts who have nothing to lose, the priest goes against all odds to save his people. It's an allegory about finding redemption and salvation.

One of the most striking things about that film is that it probably wouldn't be made today. Rarely do we see films that even suggest the existence of God. Somewhere along the way moviemakers, in general, quit incorporating biblical ideals that nourish the soul.

Those ideals need to be re-found by this generation. We need an infusion of Hollywood productions that portray the kind of religious values found in "Stars in My Crown," "Inn of the Sixth Happiness" and "A Man Called Peter."

Today's parents are supportive of their kids' sports activities (even if practice takes place on Sunday morning, a one-time no-no in America), and they're concerned about what's being served in the school cafeteria, but they are giving their children's minds over to the likes of Seth Rogen and Miley Cyrus (two examples of today's culture; he's often crude and she's always vulgar.)

Far too many adults have given up the battle for their kids' spiritual development. Why aren't we talking about this epidemic?

To fend off the Hollywood's hypnotic tugs, parents and children alike need to know God's guidelines and why He gave them to us. Church fellowship and family Bible study are still the best ways to reach our nation's youth. And parents need to lead by example, living out biblical principles and, yes, saying so to most movies.

Who, in addition to our families, is the big loser in this culture war? Society. God has been dismissed from school, vetoed from government and canceled from the entertainment venues. Look around. How's that working out for our country and our kids?

We are instructed in God's Word to be a light unto the world. We won't be until we desire to rise above the culture's standard and embrace God's. "Friendship with God is reserved for those who reverence him," the psalmist wrote. "With them alone he shares the secrets of his promises" (Psalm 25:14, Living Bible).

In a secular forum my assertions would be met with eye-rolling, and some religious reviewers also eye-roll when I complain of these matters. Many of my colleagues in criticism, in order to relate to today's moviegoing demographic, are remaining mum about the margin of abuse in movies and how the content of films affects our culture, then our society.

I love the promise of movies, as they are modern man's medium for relating parables to the masses. But just as they can uplift man, they can also mislead him. And in this age of excess, movies are the nails in the culture's coffin.

Ministers, writers, parents — speak up!

Phil Boatwright, on the Web at <http://moviereporter.com>, is the author of "Movies: The Good, the Bad and the Really, Really Bad," available through Amazon.com.

RECOVERY

cont. from p. 1

primary areas of the state. A total of 493 homes have been assessed for recovery, mud-out or rebuild. To date, 577 homeowner assistance tasks have been completed, which include everything from minor clean-up to more extensive projects. Nearly 70,000 meals have been prepared in the response.

In preliminary reporting SBDR volunteers and chaplains have made at least 348 Gospel presentations. Thirty-five individuals have responded with professions of faith in Christ.

North Carolina Baptists have handled much of the volunteer work in the Myrtle Beach and Brunswick County, N.C., area. Volunteers from Alabama and Oklahoma have been serving with South Carolina volunteers in and around Columbia, S.C. Charleston has had teams serving from Florida, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Virginia, alongside South Carolina volunteers. Ministry in Horry County, is being conducted by volunteers from Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. In different parts of the state teams from Florida, Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee have also been serving.

"We never felt more like a neighborhood than we do now because of neighbors helping each other," said flood survivor Darin Cobb, who lives in the Park Hill Retreat neighborhood in North Charleston. "I knew that churches help, but I'm amazed at what they're doing."

Throughout the response college students have been using fall breaks and weekends to serve. Students from the Baptist College of Florida were serving in Summerville this week. Another group of college students began recovery and cleanup work at an apartment complex in Columbia on October 23.



HELPING HAND — Clemson University students Katie Latta (left) and Sarah Parks help complete a Southern Baptist Disaster Relief mud-out project in Columbia, S.C., in response to historic flooding in the city. College students from across the country have been volunteering throughout the effort. (NAMB photo courtesy of John Swain)

"The collegiate and local church volunteer response to the great needs is so encouraging," Caison said. "God continues to use His people's love, and their willingness to share that love, in such real and practical ways. We are hearing many testimonies of homeowners accepting Christ as a result of the witness of volunteers."

"We continue to discover needs in many communities in South Carolina. As the water has receded, and roads are opening up, SBDR volunteers now have access to many homes in small rural communities. Please continue to pray for the SBDR leaders, volunteers and those affected in South Carolina," Caison said.

From ash-out ministry in California, Washington and Texas, to rebuild work in Detroit, SBDR volunteers are serving across the country. There are no less than eight active SBDR volunteer efforts ongoing, in addition to the relief efforts in South Carolina.

Volunteers from Kentucky, Ohio and Oklahoma are serv-

ing alongside Michigan SBDR teams to continue the long-term recovery efforts from August 2014 flooding in Detroit and the surrounding area. It was one of the largest natural disasters in Michigan history. Volunteers are needed for continuing recovery and rebuild efforts that will be ongoing for the foreseeable future.

NAMB coordinates and manages Southern Baptist responses to major disasters through partnerships with 42 state Baptist conventions, most of which have their own state disaster relief ministries.

Southern Baptists have 65,000 trained volunteers — including chaplains — and 1,550 mobile units for feeding, chain-saw, mud-out, command, communication, child care, shower, laundry, water purification, repair/rebuild and power generation. SBDR is one of the three largest mobilizers of trained disaster relief volunteers in the United States, along with the American Red Cross and The Salvation Army.

PARKISON

cont. from p. 2

7. Write us a note. In this day and age of texts and email, a written letter is a lost art. When I receive a handwritten note, I know that particular person has taken extra time to show me they care.

I'm quick to delete an email or a text, but from time to time, I find handwritten notes tucked away in various places in my house. I can't get rid of them because there is something special about those heartfelt letters.

8. Help us keep our marriage strong. Facilitate regular date nights. Volunteer to pay for a meal or babysit. With our five kids, it's no small task for someone in our church family to make that sacrifice. But it's imperative our marriage stay strong in order for the church ministry to stay strong.

A deacon and his wife said they would keep our kids for a few days, so we could get away together for a long weekend. That was a huge undertaking for them, but it was so beneficial to our marriage. This couple recognized it as a way to not only minister to us, but to our entire church as well.

9. Forgive us when we fail. Oftentimes, our mistakes are more exposed because of our position. Sometimes, the expectations placed on us and our children are unfair. But we are

regular people doing our best to honor God and be obedient to His call on our lives.

We have struggles and we will mess up. Unfortunately, we will disappoint you along the way, but know we are sorry. Please, love us despite our flaws.

10. Be passionate about your relationship with Jesus. Nothing would bring us more delight than to know all of our prayers and service for the church were producing fruit in you. It would make it all worth it to see the church set ablaze and on fire for God.

11. Volunteer more. If a position is not filled at church, frequently a pastor's spouse will feel pressured to fill it. Honor us by volunteering and helping carry the load in church more. It will show us you care about our ministry as much as we do.

12. Please think of us more than one time a year. Hopefully, you show love to your parents more than just on Mother's and Father's Day. Do the same for pastors and their families.

Although Pastor Appreciation Month comes around each October, we still need love and appreciation the other 11 months. Think of us from time to time — there is a good chance we need you!

Kelly McCorkle Parkison (@KellyParkison) is a pastor's wife and stay-at-home mom to five kids in Manchester, Tenn.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

A New Name • Genesis 17:1-8, 15-22

Twenty-four years after God called Abram, he and his wife still were childless. Few ninety-nine-year-old men and fewer ninety-year-old women conceive, so Abram surely was losing hope. God appeared to him again and confirmed His covenant, as recorded in Genesis 17. As a sign that God was still working in his life, God changed his name from Abram, which means "great father" to Abraham, or "father of many." Imagine the feelings that Abram had for seventy years or so, being known as "great father," and being childless. Then God changed his name to "father of a multitude." I wonder if Abraham winced when he thought about explaining to everyone his new name. Abraham must have known that people mocked him and thought him delusional. From our side of the story we know that God came through, but from Abraham's side, it must have seemed hopeless. That was right where God wanted Abram to be, for He would get the glory for their miracle child.

Sarah meant "my princess," which meant that first she was her father's princess, then Abram's. God's name-change to Sarah meant simply "princess," or princess to many instead of just one. God was telling Abram, now called Abraham, that Sarah would be the princess of the

new nation from his offspring. I imagine that their servants and family whispered disbelief at these amazing name changes. God changed their names a year before they had Isaac, so for a year their new names mocked their condition, or at least until she was obviously with child.

God also told Abraham that his offspring would control the land of Canaan, where Abraham currently was a guest. That promise would not be fulfilled for over four hundred years, as the Lord previously revealed in Genesis 15:13. Abraham waited for the Lord's promises, never seeing the one about the land. No wonder the bible reads four times about Abraham, "And he believed the Lord and he counted it to him as righteousness," (Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:3, Galatians 3:6, and James 2:23 KJV).

Though Abraham believed, he obviously doubted as well. In Genesis 17:18 Abraham asked God to let Ishmael be his

offspring. He did have a son already, so maybe Ishmael could be the one the Lord kept telling him about. But God told Abraham clearly that Sarah would give him a child in a year. God said to name him Isaac, which in Hebrew means "he laughs," or "laughter." In Genesis 17:17, Abraham laughed when God told him Sarah would give him a child. In Genesis 18:10-15 Sarah overheard the Lord tell Abraham she would give Abraham a child within a year. She laughed, then denied it to the Lord's angel. So God told them to name their son Laugh-ter. Sarah eventually found her sense of humor, for in Genesis 21:6 she states, "God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me," (KJV). We will examine this event in more detail in two weeks.

Concerning Ishmael, in Genesis 17:20-21 the Lord told Abraham, "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful,

and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year," (KJV). Ishmael was the result of Abraham and Sarah trying to accomplish God's promise on their own. Yet, God kept His word to Abraham and prospered the offspring of Ishmael. God keeps His word, even when we do not.

Some have mistakenly said that from Ishmael came all the Arab nations, and that the Jews today suffer because Abraham tried to accomplish God's promise in the flesh. That may sound good in a sermon, but is not a biblical teaching. First, when Hagar and Ishmael were sent out by Abraham, they ended up in Egypt, where Ishmael took an Egyptian wife. Abraham had also been in Egypt, who obviously were not offspring of Ishmael. The Egyptians were and are today a semite people group. Second, later the Edomites would be offspring of Esau, as the Ammonites were from Lot. Many Arabs descended from these as well. Just as Abraham had to wait for Isaac, we must wait a few weeks to see God's promise fulfilled.

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.



Explore the Bible
with Rick Henson

Stand Courageously • Daniel 3:13-18, 26-28

"A ship is safe in harbor, but that's not what ships are for." This succinct statement by William G. Shedd applies to this week's lesson. We continue following four young Hebrew captives in Babylon. Daniel and his three friends coupled their steadfast commitment to God with tact, wisdom, integrity, and faithfulness to the tasks at hand to garner significant places of position in the Babylonian hierarchy. Possibly, except for the dietary incident in chapter one, these four were able to comply with the requirements placed on them by King Nebuchadnezzar without upsetting the apple cart, nor compromising their belief system. However, this was about to change.

You'll recall Nebuchadnezzar's dream that Daniel recounted and interpreted (Daniel 2:27-45). In verses 32, 37, and 38, Daniel compares the head of gold to the king's incredible, expansive power. However, the young slave quickly declares this power came from "the God of heaven" (v. 37 NIV).

Daniel 2:46-48 showed Nebuchadnezzar's appreciative response. However, this egotistical ruler must have had a short-term memory lapse, or he couldn't get the "head of gold" off his mind. Chapter 3 portrays his construction of a ninety-foot-high golden statue (v. 1). He called all leaders and officials in his expansive domain to come to

a dedication service. As the multitude assembled, a herald made an announcement. Music would be presented, and when those gathered heard it, all were "to fall down and worship the image of gold" (v. 5). Those who refused would "immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace" (v. 6). Mass obeisance was paid, but some Chaldean astrologers noticed a few did not join the prostrated throng. When these men notified the king that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego ignored his royal command, he blew his top (vs. 12-13).

Calling the three young Hebrews before him, Nebuchadnezzar confirmed that they had, indeed, refused the king's edict. Giving them another chance to do his bidding, he reiterated the consequence of non-compliance, intimating haughtily that no god could save them. The three confidently replied that their God could rescue them from the fiery furnace, but even if He chose not to do so, they would not serve the king's deities or worship the golden image (v. 18). Verses

19-28 detail the three being thrown in the billowing inferno, where they were joined with another being, "like a son of the gods" (v. 25). Seeing them walking around inside the white-hot flames, the incredulous king called out, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out" (v. 26)! To the king and his cohorts' amazement, no sign of smoke or burning was found on the men or on their clothing. The tyrant ruler offered praise to God. He commended the faith of these three, saying, "they were willing to give up their lives rather than serve and worship any god except their own God" (v. 28).

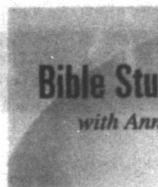
Believers have always faced such challenges; persecution is a given for "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:12). Often, the experiences don't have such a happy ending. The results of courageously standing for Christ in the face of evil or injustice can range from being ridiculed by friends to a loss of an important job or relationship, or it

may bring painful physical mistreatment or even death.

Look back at the quote at the beginning of the lesson. As we ready each day to embark on the great adventure of life, our ship may receive notice of some stormy seas ahead! Will we chance venturing out of safe harbor? How can we prepare to set sail? The steadfast young trio in our lesson gives us good examples to follow for such times: [1] they stayed calm. They didn't plead for mercy or give in; they just carefully responded to Nebuchadnezzar; [2] they were committed. Their heritage already determined their decision (see Exodus 20:3-5); [3] they boldly spoke of their faith (see Romans 1:16); [4] they were courageous and confident. They knew whatever unfolded, God was with them (Hebrews 13:5) and that He was in ultimate control.

As Christ-followers today, we must prepare to do the same. Ephesians 6:10-18 shows us the spiritual armor God has given us. Verse 17 encapsulates the passage: "Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." The Lord encourages and equips His people for bold, faithful living.

Ann Maniscalco is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Ocean Springs.



Bible Studies for Life
with Ann Maniscalco

HOUSTON

cont. from p. 1

churches pray for those who will be in transition, we also believe that it's important for the SBC family to consider ways they can open ministry opportunities for them.

"Houston is a very diverse city with many of the world's people groups residing in the city," Welch said. "IMB missionaries are some of the most highly trained and highly cultured leaders that we have in the SBC. We believe that by providing these missionaries with opportunities for church planting and

revitalization in Houston, we could see a ministry surge that could have transformational Kingdom impact throughout Houston. SBTC is currently seeking a Reach Houston coordinator to live in the city and direct church planting and revitalization efforts. During the search, former SBTC missions

director Terry Coy will serve as interim coordinator.

"Although we know the adjustment for many returning missionaries could be difficult, we are excited that God is going to use this time to join some of the returning missionaries with SBTC's focus on reaching Houston," said Coy, who grew up

in Chile as a child of Southern Baptist missionaries.

"The revitalization and church planting needs in the Houston area are great. We are asking the Lord to call the right people with the right experience to join with us in this Kingdom adventure. Look forward to great things!"

Study: Pastors grow more polarized on Islam

NASHVILLE (BP) — Protestant pastors are increasingly polarized about Islam, with a growing share labeling the Muslim faith violent while a sharply rising minority calls it spiritually good, a new study shows.

Although a majority considers Islam dangerous, a small but increasing segment believes Islam is similar to Christianity, according to a new survey by LifeWay Research.

And two-thirds of Protestant pastors agree Christianity and Islam should seek to coexist in America.

The softening of some pastors' views toward Islam is a key finding of a LifeWay Research survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors. Seventeen percent of pastors characterize Islam as similar to Christianity, nearly double the 9 percent from five years earlier. Although views shifted in both directions, positive opinions rose more significantly.

The American public, meanwhile, is twice as likely as pastors to see common ground between Islam and Christianity. In a parallel survey of 1,000 Americans, more than a third say the two faiths are similar.

"To understand the data, you have to understand that Protestant pastors are not of one mind," said Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research, "and minds are changing in more than one direction."

Shifting views

While more than 8 in 10 Protestant pastors say Islam is fundamentally different from Christianity, just as they did in 2010, minority viewpoints are increasing, LifeWay Research finds.

Compared to five years ago, pastors are much more likely to describe Islam in favorable terms. Fifty percent say Islam promotes charity, up from 33 percent. Significant numbers also describe Islam as spiritually good (32 percent, up from 19 percent), tolerant (24 percent, up from 16 percent), and open (22 percent, up from 12 percent).

Negative opinions are also on the rise, although the shift is less dramatic. A slim majority considers Islam dangerous (52 percent, up from 44 percent). Almost half say Islam promotes violence (49 percent, up from 42 percent) and is spiritually evil (46 percent, up from 39 percent).

Stetzer explained, "Some mainline pastors and a few evangelicals are answering questions in a more positive way, while some evangelicals and a few mainline Protestants are trending in a negative way. But the biggest move is in the smallest percent — and is in a more positive direction."

The surveys allowed pastors to choose positive and negative terms to describe Islam, and pastors chose more of both this year than they did in LifeWay Research's survey five years ago. Fewer pastors opted for "none of these."

In the most pointed increase, 53 percent of pastors say Islam is "relevant today," an opinion held by only 28 percent five years earlier.

"It only makes sense that Islam is relevant today — it's on the evening news regularly. What's perhaps most interesting is that the majority of that coverage is negative, but some pastors still evidence a more positive perception," Stetzer said.

"Furthermore, it is worth noting that while pastors appear to be increasingly

"It only makes sense that Islam is relevant today — it's on the evening news regularly. What's perhaps most interesting is that the majority of that coverage is negative, but some pastors still evidence a more positive perception."

Ed Stetzer

executive director of LifeWay Research

familiar with Islam," Stetzer said, "the same large majority recognizes unmistakable differences between Islam and Christianity."

Moving apart

Evangelical and mainline pastors hold divergent opinions about Islam. Most self-identified evangelical ministers view it as a violent and dangerous faith, while most self-identified mainline pastors associate it with peace, love and compassion.

The gap has widened in the past five years.

Fifty-two percent of evangelical pastors today characterize Islam as spiritually evil (up from 44 percent), while only 32 percent of mainline pastors agree, a rate unchanged from five years ago.

Conversely, nearly half of mainline pastors call Islam spiritually good (47 percent, up from 35 percent). Fewer than 1 in 4 evangelical pastors share that opinion (24 percent, up from 16 percent).

Evangelical pastors increasingly say Islam is dangerous (59 percent, up from 50 percent) and promotes violence (54 percent, up from 49 percent), while mainline pastors' views on those terms are little changed. In contrast, growing numbers of mainline pastors say Islam is tolerant (35 percent, up from 25 percent) and open (30 percent, up from 18 percent), while evangelical pastors' agreement with those terms rises only slightly.

Asked which of two well-known descriptions is closer to their beliefs, 59 percent of evangelical pastors choose evangelist Franklin Graham's characterization of Islam as "a very evil and a very wicked religion," while 51 percent of mainline pastors choose former President George W. Bush's comment, "the Muslim faith is based upon peace and love and compassion."

"While these quotes are hardly new, they still embody opposite perspectives held by different theological groups of Christian leaders," Stetzer said.

Americans' views

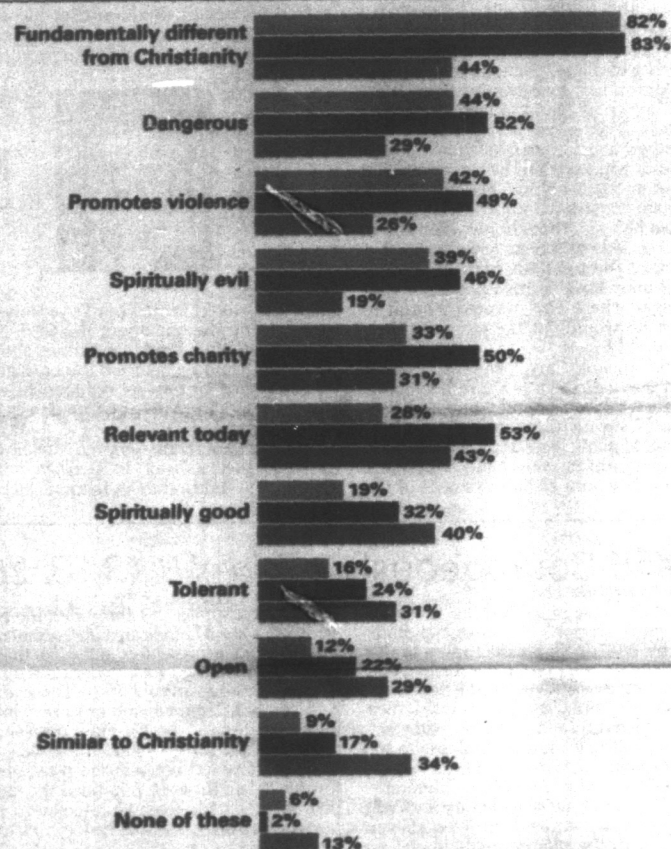
Though pastors don't see eye to eye on Islam, an even larger chasm divides them from the American public.

While 83 percent of Protestant pastors believe Islam is fundamentally different from Christianity, only 44 percent of Americans agree. Almost as many Americans (34 percent) consider the two faiths similar.

Overall, Americans tend to be more sympathetic than pastors toward Islam. They are less likely than both mainline and evangelical pastors to view Islam as dangerous, violent or spiritually evil.

Which of the following characteristics would you use to describe Islam?

■ 2010 - Protestant Pastors ■ 2015 - Protestant Pastors ■ 2015 - All Americans



Note: Respondents could choose all that apply.

LIFEWAY

LifeWayResearch.com

Methodology

The phone survey of Americans was conducted Sept. 14-28, 2015. The calling utilized random digit dialing. Fifty percent of completes were among landlines and 50 percent among cellphones. Maximum quotas and slight weights were used for gender, region, age, ethnicity and education to more accurately reflect the population. The completed sample is 1,000 surveys. The sample provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed plus or minus 3.6 percent. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

The phone survey of Protestant pastors was conducted Sept. 8-21, 2015. The calling list was a stratified random sample drawn from a list of all Protestant churches in America. Each interview was conducted with the senior pastor, minister or priest of the church called. Responses were weighted by region to more accurately reflect the population. The completed sample is 1,000 surveys. The sample provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed plus or minus 3.2 percent. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

LifeWay Research, based in Nashville, is an evangelical research firm that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect the church.

But for most Americans, Islam isn't a black-and-white issue, LifeWay Research finds. Their uncertainty is evident throughout the survey.

While 31 percent of Americans say Islam is tolerant, almost as many (26 percent) say it promotes violence. Equal numbers find Islam to be dangerous and open (29 percent each).

Not a single characteristic — positive or negative — gains agreement from a majority, and 13 percent of Americans remain entirely undecided, choosing "none of these."

Americans are also unsure whether Christians and Muslims pray to the same God — 46 percent say yes, while 47 percent say no.